

Member Handbook



(Some title and graphic)



Welcome to RainShadow Chorale!

As your director, I am thrilled to work with each of you! The strength of our choir comes from the strengths of each individual and the variety of talents of each person. I hope that when we sing together, each person will bring their whole voice and their whole musical self to our ensemble. From there, we can craft the choir and let our repertoire shine. We need your particular gifts to be the RainShadow Chorale!

What You Can Expect From RainShadow:

- A quality, trained artistic director who will create interesting programs, introduce us to a variety of musical forms, and challenge us in our musical skill!
- A dedicated board and team of volunteers to support the organization and operational elements that make RainShadow successful!
- Opportunities for training and development of your musical abilities.
- A supportive family of people who love music, love to express through song and are willing to support each other in a non-judgmental or competitive environment.

What We Expect of Members:

- To be dedicated to your family of singers: to be supportive, non-judgmental and willing to help each other.
- To be singing more than just at rehearsals and sectionals, but exercising your voice often - daily if possible. Warmups, favorite pieces, - anything!
- To become proficient in the music early in the rehearsal process so our director can develop our skill and experience beyond just learning notes.

This includes:

- Working on your music even before rehearsals start
 - Working on learning your parts between rehearsals
 - Attending sectional rehearsals when your schedule allows
 - Attend all weekly rehearsals unless sick or other unavoidable circumstances
 - Attending any special rehearsals such as the dress rehearsal
- Be willing to do things that are challenging and outside of your comfort zone (memorizing some music, choreography, unusual musical forms, singing acapella, singing in non-english languages, choral orchestrations, just to name a few)
 - You are a vocalist in a group of vocalists. For the purpose of being organized, vocalists are placed in a section (SATB). You may be requested to sing parts that are not in your assigned section but will always be in your vocal range.

Behavioral Norms:

- Arrive at rehearsals with music & pencil, and be prepared to sing!
- Socialize before or after rehearsal - not during
- Water in a closed container is acceptable in rehearsals
- No perfume, cologne or scented fragrances
- Wear your choir provided name tag on your upper torso at every rehearsal
- Mark your music in ways that are useful to you! Pristine music lacks the nuances the director desires - mark it up! Pencil or erasable highlighter only. Note: at the beginning of a season you may need to erase the previous users notes.

Remember to use good choral techniques:

- Actively remember and use those basic singing techniques: posture, support, etc...
- If you have learned specific techniques from private instructors or groups, use those techniques as your baseline.
- Our director is a teaching director and will be instructing us in various techniques of singing.

Practice Opportunities and Aides:

- Music - You will be notified via email before rehearsals start of where and when to pick up your music packet. Member donations are generally dropped off at this time along with the season's registration form.
- YouTube examples of the pieces are generally available and will be identified. These may not represent exactly how our director will conduct the pieces, but they will give you a general feel for the music.
- Sectional Rehearsals may begin before general rehearsals begin. These sectionals will continue into the season for as long as they are needed. Attending sectional rehearsals is strongly encouraged but we understand schedule conflicts occur.
- MIDI files of each part will generally be available at the beginning of each season. These files can be found on the members section of the website. (See Website Section at the end)
- Home vocal work - crunching out parts at home to learn the music is expected of everyone. This also includes regularly exercising your voice in some fashion - daily if possible.
- Warmup Video - in the Members Only section of the website there is a warm up video that is a great way to exercise your voice!

- If additional assistance is needed for your voice or for particularly troubling sections, contact your section leader for the best avenue to tackle the problem.
- Private vocal lessons are not required but are a superb option to improve vocal skills, help with solo preparation or trouble shooting issues you may be experiencing. Our director gives private lessons (apart from RainShadow) or may be able to assist you in finding a vocal teacher.
- Rehearsals may be broadcasted live on RainShadow's Facebook Site in the "Member Only" area. Archived recordings of rehearsals are there as well. This gives vocalist an opportunity to go back and review specific pieces of music or problem areas. If you miss a rehearsal, you can practice with the recording and catch the director's notes.

Each Member Is A Valued Instrument!

All of the above is in service of facilitating a joyful experience for singers and audiences alike. We can't experience that joy if we struggle with the basics and music not well learned. Each of us must first devote ourselves to developing individual competence in the music and in technique. Only then will we play our part on this team and produce a quality and satisfying musical experience!

Financial Information:

RainShadow is a 501 (c) (3) Non-profit Organization which makes all contributions (member and public) tax deductible. Our fiscal structure has three elements that fund the organization.

- Donations from Organizations and Individuals,
- Ticket Donations at performances and
- Suggested Member Donations: \$100/concert

Why Member Donations?

In order to create an extraordinary musical experience for our vocalists, we hire professionals. Our director and pianists are paid positions that give us a quality base in which to satiate our musical desires!

Additionally, this gives us the ability to sing in good venues and purchase some new music each season. We do use music from past programs on occasion but we want to continually expand our repertoire.

Important: We don't want our members to not participate because they can't afford the suggested member donation. Give what you can.

Communication:

Communication is a key element for both the logistics of the team but also for the development of our skill. You will receive emails from the board secretary and music notes from our director. These contain important information. **Please read your emails!!**

Your primary point of contact is your section leader.

You will have access to member phone numbers and email addresses on the members portal of the web site. These are confidential and are not to be given out unless specific permission is given.

When to communicate:

If you are struggling with a section of the music, tell the section leader so these areas can be addressed during sectional rehearsals.

If you are going to be late or absent from a rehearsal, notify your section leader. Several absences or chronic lateness may result in a request that you sit out the season. Attendance is recorded by the section leaders.

If you are sick - especially with a respiratory illness like flu or COVID, call your section leader and **STAY AWAY.**

Why the attendance requirements?

As a rule, if you miss more than 2 rehearsals you may be asked to sit out the rest of the season. We typically have 10 rehearsals per concert program and missing more than two rehearsals compromises your ability to effectively learn the music, receive director's notes, and blend with the other voices. This compromises the overall quality of the group's musical performance.

If you find yourself in this situation, have a discussion with your section leader. If you can demonstrate proficiency in your ability to sing the music an exception is a possibility.

Music:

Music is purchased by RainShadow and checked out to members from the music library. Scores are numbered, may **only** be marked in pencil or removable highlighter, and must be returned after the concert. **If you lose, seriously damage, or mark your music in pen or permanent highlighter, you will responsible for paying for its replacement.**

Measure Numbers: Not all scores have measure numbers notated. Please write in the measure numbers to facilitate navigation through the music.

If there are any questions about music, please contact the Music Librarian, Bev Schaaf.

Performance Information:

Dress Rehearsals are mandatory as this is our dry run in the venue. Wear standard rehearsal garb unless otherwise instructed.

Black Folders/Binders are required (members purchase their own). If you are using an electronic reader for your music, it must be inside a black folder.

Dress: Members are responsible for acquiring and maintaining their own performance dress unless specifically indicated below. If this presents a financial hardship, please request a scholarship application from the Board Treasurer

Men: Black Tuxedos, Black Bow Tie, White Shirt, Black Pants, no cummerbund or vest, black dress shoes, black socks

Women: Uniform black full length dresses, black jacket, black hose, black shoes (no high heels), and uniform jewelry. Check with your section leader for ordering information.

Intermissions: Choir members are responsible for their own fluids and snacks.

Post Performance:

- Following each performance we encourage choir members to mingle with the audience and be available to answer questions. This is a prime time to recruit new talent, network for new performance opportunities and generally promote our group.
- Prior to departing the last performance of each concert, bins will be available in the choir staging area in which you can return your music. If you have copied music please return both the original and the copy. Any missing music will result in the member paying for replacements.

Service Opportunities:

We rely on our members to volunteer to help in a number of ways in order for the group to function and performance to be seamless. Below are just a few of these opportunities.

Rehearsal Set Up and Tear Down

Performance Set Up and Tear Down

Group Social Events

Non-singers: (ticket sales, door greeters, etc...)

Accommodations:

RainShadow has members who may have temporary or permanent mobility challenges. We do our best to provide comfortable space and accommodations to the extent we can, both during rehearsals and performances. Communicate with your section leader if you find you are having difficulty with standing for the duration of a performance or walking on or off stage.

Additionally, vocalists may use their own music stands if they are having difficulty holding music for the duration of rehearsals and performances.

RainShadow Administration and Leadership

RainShadow's Board of Directors facilitates the planning and operational needs of RainShadow including administration of the budget. Current board members contact information can be found in the member's portal of our website or on the included insert. Feel free to contact our board members if you have concerns, questions, suggestions or observations!

Our Website:

<http://rainshadowchorale.org>

The RainShadow website contains additional information and links. Our history, mission, vision, values and biographies are all part of the public facing section.

Additionally, there is a member portal that is password protected. Obtain the password from your section leader or the individual mentoring your orientation. The member's only section has the chorale roster, MIDI files, recordings, pictures, concert recordings, and more!

<http://rainshadowchorale.org/members/>

Confidentiality:

Please remember, member contact information, pictures and recordings are confidential and/or privileged information. Sharing of these may only be done with permission.

Any use of the RainShadow brand name, such as for a small group performance, must be pre-approved by the RainShadow Board and the Artistic Director.